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Leadership and Teacher Development in Palestine

In September, 2012, the Center for International Education (CIE) in the College of Education was awarded a \$1 million sub-contract from AMIDEAST, with USAID West Bank & Gaza funding, to help with the reform of teacher education in the West Bank and Gaza, Palestine. The project, *Leadership and Teacher Development*, is a comprehensive education reform initiative focused on supporting the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's national effort in teacher development. The overall goal is to improve the quality of education through a comprehensive approach to leadership and teacher development, concentrating on in-service teachers in grades 5-10, principals, and supervisors, and the macro policy context. The four major objectives of LTD are:

- Capacity of school principals, supervisors and teachers to improve classroom instruction is enhanced
- National cadre of high-quality teacher and leadership educators is created
- Policies, structures and systems within key Ministry of Education departments supporting leadership and teacher development are created and harmonized
- Pre-service teacher education in Gaza is enhanced

The CIE team has worked closely with colleagues at AMIDEAST in Ramallah, West Bank: Dr. Chris Shinn, Dr. Said Asaf, Dr. Lou Cristillo, and Nariman Rajab. They have also worked closely with senior officers at the National Institute for Educational Training: Dr. Shahanaz Far and Dr. Nuha Iter. In Gaza, the team has worked closely with Drs. XXX and YYY,

CIE has been responsible for assisting with the implementation of four primary activities: the teacher education enhancement program in West Bank and Gaza, strategic planning with faculty and administrators at Al-Azhar University in Gaza; hosting a study tour at UMass for senior policy makers; and providing *ad hoc* advice on monitoring and evaluation, as well as developing a master training system. Early in the project, the CIE team also worked on rationalizing the national performance assessment system. The PI for this project is **Gretchen Rossman**; Co-PIs are **Sharon Rallis** and **Joe Berger**. To date, the CIE team has visited the West Bank and Gaza on five separate occasions to work with colleagues on teacher educator enhancement and strategic planning, offering workshops co-facilitated with colleagues from AMIDEAST, NIET, and Al-Azhar University on action research, learning circles, professional portfolios, and strategic planning. Attending these workshops have been teacher educators from NIET, faculty members from YY universities in the West Bank, and faculty members from Al-Azhar University.

The team's most recent trip took place in June, 2014, just as circumstances in both the West Bank and Gaza became insecure. The project is currently on hold, as AMIDEAST and the CIE team await further information about USAID funding, given the challenging situation.